

Peterborough Council needs to know that residents want their community to be a city which is supported by accountable, fair, transparent and public services.

**The Calendar leading up to the budget –
Upcoming Council Meetings:**

Monday November 7	Budget Committee
Monday November 14	City Council
Monday November 28	Budget Committee (5:00pm)
Tuesday November 29	Budget Committee (5:00pm)
Wednesday November 30	Budget Committee (5:00pm)
Thursday December 1	Budget Committee (5:00pm)
Monday December 5	Committee of the Whole
Wednesday December 7	Budget Committee – Public Meeting (7:00pm)
Monday December 12	City Council

You get what you pay for –
Peterborough public services are worth it! Public services matter. What have Peterborough residents said about municipal services?

“City Workers best insurance for stormy days.”

*“I want to thank city council for the prompt and professional way in which the city’s public works crew responded to the damage on my street Wednesday night as a result of the wind storm.”
... “Most of the debris was gone that day. If this is the level of service my tax dollars are funding, then please keep up the good work for it is money well spent.”*

*Peterborough Examiner
Commentary June 13, 2011*

Coalition of
Peterborough
Municipal Workers



cope491:djk

Public services are fair and happen to be a great deal.

Economist Hugh Mackenzie has detailed Canadians receive services worth about half of their annual income; examined another way, the average Canadian gets over \$15,000 worth of services for their taxes. When these services are eroded, contracted out or privatized, quality and access go down.

Despite strong public services, which deliver improved communities, Mayor Bennett has started a budget process which will erode these things.



Mayor Bennett and Council are about to start the city's public budget process. Council started their process months ago - in secret. It took CUPE and the Peterborough Examiner filing freedom of information requests to get access to the budget discussions the Mayor has had. A lot of ideas were suggested in these 'consultations' – some good and some would result in a reduction of service and outsourcing to private companies. Despite positive suggestions, such as capital spending, the Mayor and others on Council want to use more privatization resulting in staffing cuts – this will mean less service and a higher cost.

Privatization is a transfer of public services and money into private hands and it can take many forms. It is based on the idea that anything can be turned into a commodity to be bought or sold. Often these deals are not put under public scrutiny and if they don't live up to public expectations – they are hard to reverse.

Peterborough residents, ratepayers and workers have a voice to; on finances one could let their Counsellor know these Peterborough facts:

- Public services in Peterborough are not too expensive – from 2005 to 2008 labour costs rose only 1.6% as a percentage of total operating expenditures – from 33.1% in '05 to 34.7% in '08. This includes staff benefits. Currently they are still less than 40% of the total operating expenditures.
- Long-term debt responsibility per household has gone down. In 2005, each Peterborough household owed \$1,983 and in 2008 it was down to \$1,819 – down \$164 per household.

During this provincial election, Peterborough Council could also be asking why municipalities, do not always get the support they need from other levels of government:

- Why are Ontario municipalities getting almost 10% less than in 2006? Transfer payments from other levels of government are around 17%; this is down from 26% in 1996. Municipalities deliver services they were never meant to provide. Public sector workers provide high levels of service – other levels of government need to support their home communities. The province has taken steps to upload services, but needs to continue. As a percentage, total provincial operating grants – money to operate services such as ambulances – has stayed almost the same over the last five years. The province gave Peterborough 24.7% in 2005 and most recently that number was down to 24.65%.
- Despite the province taking back responsibility for many services, local Ontario governments have seen significant spending growth in key areas. These areas are generally regulated or influenced by the Province. From 2003 to 2008, costs for municipal roles in health related costs went up 21.8%, water and solid waste costs are up 19.3%, and social housing costs are up 16.8%.
- Another reason to ask Federal and Provincial politicians – especially during an election – about support is what happens when municipalities are not given fair share. User fees across the province in municipalities have risen to around 20% of a local government's budget – this is one of the highest levels in the country and puts services further out of reach for working families. In Peterborough this number is already higher than the provincial average at 24.2%.